

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8762

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UNCLAS CARACAS 5124

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ETRN, VE

SUBJ: AIRFREIGHT SITUATION AT MAIQUETIA INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

1. IN VIEW OF THE VERY SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES REGARDING THE STORAGE AND HANDLING OF AIR FREIGHT IN MAQUETIA AIRPORT, AND UPON PRESSURE EXERTED BY VARIOUS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND SIMILAR GROUPS, AN INTERMINISTRERIAL COMMITTEE WAS BEEN FORMED WHICH IS TO PRESENT TO THE PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC WITHIN 30 DAYS SUGGESTIONS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

2. WHILE STORAGE SPACE IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS, THE MAJOR CAUSE SEEMS TO LIE IN THE EXTREMELY SLOW AND TEDIOUS CUSTOMS PROCEDURES, CONSISTING OF 23 DIFFERENT STEPS AN IMPORTER HAS TO PASS THROUGH BEFORE HE CAN TAKE HIS MERCHANDISE OUT OF CUSTOMS. DURING THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE, THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS, WHILE PROMISING FULL COOPERATION, EXPLAINED THAT A CHANGE IN CUSTOMS LAW WOULD BE REQUIRED TO SPEED UP PROCEDURES IN A MEASUREABLE WAY. THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY HAS COMMENCED CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADDITIONAL BS. 3 MILLION CUSTOMS STORAGE SHED.

3. AIRLINES EXPLAINED THAT AIR FREIGHT INPUT INTO THE CUSTOMS AREA WILL INCREASE DRASTICALLY AND REPORTED THAT THERE ARE ALREADY FIVE B-747 PURE FREIGHTER FLIGHTS A WEEK AND THAT THE NUMBER OF EXTRA SECTIONS AND CHARTERS IS INCREASING RAPIDLY.

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4. THE DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT

OFFICE FOR THE AIRPORT EXPANSION WILL VISIT THE US. BEGINNING MAY 15 TO STUDY POSSIBILITIES OF MECHANIZATION.

5. IN THE MEANTIME CONGESTION AND EXPOSURE PROBLEMS WILL CONTINUE. THE GENERAL FREIGHT SITUATION IS AGGRAVATED BECAUSE OF THE CHRONIC CONGESTION OF LA GUAIRA PORT FOR SIMILAR REASONS.
SHLAUDEMAM

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